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BOROUGH OF THETFORD



ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

TOGETHER WITH THE

REPORT OF THE

Surveyor & Sanitary Inspector

FOR THE YEAR

1950



STAFF :

Medical Officer of Health :

C.W. ORR, L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S.(Edin.), L.R.F.P.& S. (Glas.), D.P.H.
(from 1.1.50 to 24.9.50)

ROBERT N. C. McCURDY, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.
(from 25.9.50 to 31.12.50)

Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector :

LEONARD G. HOWELL, M.I.Mun.E., F.S.I.A.

Assistant Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector :

R. C. R. ROBINSON, M.S.I.A., C.R.S.I.
(from 1.2.50 to 31.12.50)

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

Medical Officer of Health

for the year ended December 31st, 1950
To the Thetford Borough Council

MR. MAYOR, ALDERMEN AND COUNCILLORS,

I have the honour to present my First Annual Report on the sanitary circumstances, health and vital statistics of your Borough for the year 1950.

In most respects the health of the Borough was excellent. The birth rate rose to 16·4 per thousand of the population, although the national rate continued to fall and is now 15·8. The death rate fell to 12·3, and is now only a little above the national figure of 11·6. Five persons out of the 55 who died lived to be 90 or over.

For the second year running there were no stillbirths, and for the first year for as long as I have been able to obtain records no infant died under the age of one year. This reflects great credit on the Doctors, Midwives and others responsible for the care of mothers and babies.

In respect of the total number of cases of infectious disease notified there was an increase over 1949, but this was due almost entirely to the epidemics of measles and whooping cough. Of the four cases of poliomyelitis notified, only one was finally confirmed.

A disquieting feature, however, was that the number of deaths from tuberculosis rose slightly. The tuberculosis death rate is now 0·68 per thousand of the population, against the national rate of 0·36 and the County of Norfolk rate of only 0·22. Of the factors which are to some extent under the control of the Borough Council, good housing is by far the most important in improving this situation. So long as there is so much overcrowding, and so many insanitary dwellings are still inhabited in the Borough, some responsibility must be accepted for it.

During 1950 twenty-two Council Houses were completed, the same number as in 1949. All of these were with three bedrooms.

Although published in 1949, the Report of the Royal Commission on population, with its important recommendations on housing, has not received the attention it deserves.

Figures are given in this report to show that about 42 per cent. of married couples have only one or no children, 47 per cent. have two to four children and 11 per cent. have five or more children.

It is clear therefore that the three-bedroomed house is just the right size for only about half the number of families, it is unnecessarily big for 42 per cent. and too small for another 11 per cent. Furthermore, there are already about 10 per cent. of the population aged 65 and over and in another 30 years this percentage will have risen to at least 16. Far more small houses will be wanted in the future by those whose children have left home. It is unfair that these elderly people, and those who do not get married, should be obliged to remain in the dilapidated old cottages because they cannot fully utilise a three-bedroomed house.

I should like to express my great appreciation of the sympathetic consideration which has always been given to those applications for council houses which have, in my opinion, deserved priority on medical grounds. At the same time I believe it would be of great help if there were some clearly defined method of selecting tenants for council houses which was known to, and could be understood by, applicants.

No action was taken during the year under Section 47 of the National Assistance Act, 1948.

GENERAL STATISTICS

Area in acres	..	..	..	..	..	7,096
Population (estimated by Registrar-General at mid-year)						4,385
Number of inhabited houses	..	..	..	..		1,399
Rateable value at 1st April, 1950	..	..	..	£19,537	0 0	
Product of Penny Rate	..	..	..	..	£80	0 0

MEDICAL STATISTICS

Births	Live births,	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
	legitimate ..	29	41	70
	illegitimate	2	0	2
		—	—	—
		31	41	72
	Stillbirths ..	Nil.		

Population at mid-year, births, birth-rate, stillbirths, stillbirth rates, during the past five years

	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950
Population	4,344	4,346	4,378	4,388	4,385
Births (total)	105	102	82	69	72
Birthrate, per 1,000 of population	24·1	23·5	18·7	15·7	16·4
Stillbirths	1	2	3	0	0
Stillbirth rate, per 1,000 of population	0·23	0·46	0·68	0	0
„ per 1,000 total births ..	9·52	20·6	35·3	0	0

Deaths	<i>All ages</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
		27	27	54
	Infants under 1 year	..	Nil	

Population at mid-year, deaths, deathrate, infant deaths and Infant Mortality Rate during the past five years

	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950
Population	4,344	4,346	4,378	4,388	4,385
Deaths	59	68	62	62	54
Deathrate, per 1,000 of population	13·6	15·6	14·2	14·2	12·3
Infant deaths	6	1	3	4	0
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 live births ..	57·1	10·3	36·6	58·0	0

Deaths from certain selected causes during the past five years
(figures as available)

	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950
Tuberculosis	3	2	2	1	3
Bronchitis and Pneumonia	—	—	2	2	2
Other notifiable infectious diseases	—	—	0	0	0
Motor vehicle and other accidents	—	—	1	2	1
Pregnancy, childbirth and abortion	0	0	1	0	0
Cancer	11	6	11	12	2

Deaths according to ages (compiled from returns submitted by the District Registrar)

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Under 1 year	0	0	0
1 and under 5	0	0	0
5 „ „ 10	0	0	0
10 „ „ 20	0	0	0
20 „ „ 30	0	1	1
30 „ „ 40	0	0	0
40 „ „ 50	1	2	3
50 „ „ 60	1	0	1
60 „ „ 70	4	4	8
70 „ „ 80	12	8	20
80 „ „ 90	8	8	16
90 and over	1	4	5
TOTALS	27	27	54

Causes of death at ages above 1 year and below 60

<i>Age group</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Cause</i>
20 to 30 ..	Female	Cancer
40 to 50 ..	Male Female Female	Heart failure Pulmonary tuberculosis Cancer
50 to 60 ..	Male	Pulmonary tuberculosis

In addition one Female over 80 died as the result of an accidental fall.

Deaths from all causes (Registrar General's short list)

<i>List No.</i>	<i>Cause</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
1	Tuberculosis, respiratory	1	1	2
2	Tuberculosis, other ..	0	1	1
12	Cancer, breast	0	1	1
14	Cancer, other sites ..	0	1	1
15	Leukaemia	0	1	1
17	Vascular lesions of nervous system	4	4	8
18	Coronary disease, angina	3	1	4
19	Hypertension with heart disease	2	1	3
20	Other heart disease ..	6	10	16
21	Other circulatory disease	2	3	5
23	Pneumonia	0	1	1
24	Bronchitis	1	0	1
29	Hyperplasia of prostate	5	0	5
32	Other diseases	2	1	3
34	Accidents, other than motor vehicle	0	1	1
35	Suicide	1	0	1
	TOTALS ..	27	27	54

The following table compares birth rates, death rates, etc., in this Borough with those of England and Wales and of the Administrative County of Norfolk in 1950

	<i>England and Wales</i>	<i>Norfolk</i>	Thetford M.B.
Birth rate per 1,000 of population	15·8	15·85	16·4
Stillbirth rate per 1,000 of population	0·37	0·33	0
Death rate per 1,000 of population	11·6	11·46	12·3
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 live births	29·8	25·7	0
Tuberculosis death rate per 1,000 of population	0·36	0·22	0·68
Tuberculosis case rate per 1,000 of population	—	0·89	2·5

The tuberculosis death rate and case rate are both three times as high as the corresponding county rates.

Infectious Diseases notified during the past five years

	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950
Tuberculosis, all sites ..	12	9	3	6	11
Scarlet fever	1	0	3	1	2
Whooping cough	34	5	61	16	68
Erysipelas	5	0	1	2	2
Dysentery	0	0	1	0	2
Malaria	2	0	0	0	0
Measles	16	9	189	3	150
Poliomyelitis	0	2	0	0	4
Pneumonia	5	3	6	22	6
Puerperal pyrexia	0	1	1	0	1
Food poisoning	0	0	0	1	0
Infectious jaundice ..	31	25	0	3	5

Three of the four cases of poliomyelitis notified were unconfirmed.

The case of puerperal pyrexia was not due to infection and the temperature rapidly subsided.

No case of food poisoning was notified.

Infectious diseases notified in 1950, by ages

<i>Disease</i>	<i>under 1 year</i>	<i>1-5</i>	<i>5-10</i>	<i>10-15</i>	<i>15-25</i>	<i>25-45</i>	<i>45-65</i>	<i>over 65</i>	<i>Total</i>
Tuberculosis, all sites	0	0	2	0	3	3	3	0	11
Scarlet fever ..	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Whooping cough ..	6	26	32	2	2	0	0	0	68
Erysipelas	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Dysentery	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Measles	5	67	70	2	0	5	1	0	150
Poliomyelitis ..	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	4
Pneumonia	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	1	6
Puerperal pyrexia ..	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Infectious jaundice ..	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	5

Infectious diseases notified in 1950, by month of notification

<i>Disease</i>	<i>Jan.</i>	<i>Feb.</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr.</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>June</i>	<i>July</i>	<i>Aug.</i>	<i>Sept</i>	<i>Oct.</i>	<i>Nov.</i>	<i>Dec.</i>	<i>Tot.</i>
Tuberculosis, all sites	0	2	0	0	1	0	2	2	0	3	1	0	11
Scarlet fever ..	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Whooping cough ..	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	2	19	39	68
Erysipelas	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Dysentery	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Measles	0	1	2	6	14	94	29	2	2	0	0	0	150
Poliomyelitis ..	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	4
Pneumonia ..	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	6
Puerperal pyrexia	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Infectious jaundice	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	5

The following table shows the number of cases on the tuberculosis register at 31.12.50 compared with 31.12.49.

	<i>Respiratory</i>			<i>Non-Respiratory</i>			<i>Grand Total</i>
	<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>	<i>Total</i>	
31.12.49	11	7	18	8	7	15	33
31.12.50	13	7	20	9	8	17	37

In conclusion I should like to thank the Chairman and Members of the Public Health Committee and my colleagues on the staff for their support and helpfulness during the year.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient servant,

ROBERT N. C. McCURDY,

Medical Officer of Health.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT

for the Year 1950

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

Water Supply

The undermentioned extension to the water mains were laid during the year :

- (i) From the existing main in Ickniel Way to serve new Council Houses erected in Saxon Place.
- (ii) Approximately 500 yards of 7 in. main from Station Road via Millers Lane, Water Lane, Minstergate Street, to link up with the 5 in. main in White Hart Street. This new main was laid to boost water supplies in the area and to give an increased supply of water to the Canning Factory in Minstergate Street.

Practically all the houses within the Borough area have a piped water supply, either direct into the house or to within the curtilage of the house.

There was no shortage of water during the year and the pumping level in the deep well has remained at the normal reading.

Water samples were taken throughout the year and submitted to the Public Analyst for both Chemical and Bacteriological examination. The laboratory reports were most satisfactory and a copy of the Chemical Analysis Report is given as an appendix.

Drainage and Sewerage

During the year under review work has been progressing on the general sewerage scheme and the provision of sewage disposal works for Thetford. Many difficulties have been encountered by the Contractors, water and running sand considerably slowed down the rate of progress of laying sewers in several sections of the town.

Closet Accommodation

The only change during the year was the addition of 22 water closets for new houses and the conversion of 9 vaults to pails. These alterations now give totals of 403 W.C.'s, 690 Pails, 311 Vaults within the Borough.

Public Cleansing

The collection of house refuse remained the same as in previous years.

Sanitary Inspection of the Area

The following table summarises the inspections made during the year by your Sanitary Inspector :

<i>Description</i>	<i>Inspections</i>	<i>Informal Notices</i>	<i>No. Abated</i>
Drainage of Premises ..	68	7	7
Survey of house drainage for connections to new sewer	696	—	—
General nuisances	74	17	17
Housing defects	49	13	12
Infectious diseases ..	13	— 8 disinfections	
Rats and Mice	78	—	—
Dangerous Buildings ..	9	5	5
Verminous and filthy pre-mises	34	1 11 disinfestations	1
Housing investigations with M.O.H.	41	—	—
Factories	111	26	26
Bakehouses	12	2	2
Butchers Shops	24	2	2
Food Shops	38	—	—
Restaurants and Cafes ..	33	5	5
Fried Fish Shops	23	1	1
Ice-cream premises	29	—	—
Dairies	4	—	—
Market Stalls	41	—	—

Food Inspection

(i) MILK SUPPLY

Milk Distribution has been satisfactory and, as in previous years, samples were taken and tested by lactometer.

(ii) MEAT AND OTHER FOODS

A considerable quantity of Meat and Other Foods were examined during the year resulting in the following list of food being condemned as unfit for human consumption :

Cheese	2062 lbs.
Tomato Puree	3373 lbs.
Fish	227 lbs.
Bacon	156 lbs.
Frozen Meat	64 lbs.
Canned Ham	57 lbs.
Rice	42 lbs.
Various tinned foods	419 tins

Food Premises

Regular inspections have been carried out at the premises registered in accordance with Section 14 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938, for the manufacture of prepared and preserved foods. Informal action was taken in respect of contraventions of the requirements of Section 13 of the Act, and a satisfactory standard is being achieved.

Inspections have been carried out at Cafes, Restaurants and retail food shops within the Borough. Where necessary, advice was given and letters have been sent requesting works of repair or improvements in the general facilities in relation to Section 13 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938.

Byelaws were made by the Council under Section 15 of the Act, relating to the handling, wrapping and delivery of food and sale of food in the open air. These were subsequently confirmed by the Ministry of Food. The Byelaws give added powers in ensuring that the public receive a clean article of food.

Ice-cream

There is one premise registered for the manufacture and sale of Ice-cream and ten premises are registered for the sale only.

Eight samples were submitted to the Public Health Laboratory for bacteriological examination and the reports received showed the samples to be graded as follows :

Grade One	6
Grade Two	2

Factories Act, 1937 and 1948

Part I of the Act

1. Inspections for purposes of provisions as to health.

<i>Premises</i>	<i>Number on Register</i>	<i>Number of</i>		
		<i>Inspections</i>	<i>Written Notices</i>	<i>Occupiers Prosecuted</i>
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	3	9	3	—
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	33	98	24	—
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority ..	ONE HOUSING SITE	4	—	—
TOTALS ..	37	111	27	—

2. Cases in which defects were found.

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Number of Cases in which Defects were found</i>				<i>Number of cases in which Prosecutions were Instituted</i>
	<i>Found</i>	<i>Remedied</i>	<i>Referred to H.M. Inspector</i>	<i>Referred by H.M. Inspector</i>	
Want of cleanliness (S.1)	3	2	—	2	—
Overcrowding (S.2) ..	—	—			—
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)	—	—		—	—
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)	—	—	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)	—	—		—	—
Sanitary offences against the Act (S.7)	26	26	—	—	—
Other Offences against the Act	—	—	—	—	—
TOTALS ..	29	28	—	2	—

In the company of the Norfolk County Divisional Fire Officer, 19 visits to Factories were made to ascertain “ Means of Escape in Case of Fire.” Advice was given where necessary and Certificates as to means of Escape granted to eight Factories.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient servant,

LEONARD G. HOWELL,

Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector.

APPENDIX

LINCOLNE SUTTON AND WOOD,
CLARENCE HOUSE,
6, CLARENCE ROAD,
NORWICH.

6th June, 1950.

CERTIFICATE OF ANALYSIS OF WATER
No. 487B

Sample received from : Borough Surveyor, Guildhall, Thetford
Mark or Seal : TBC 50/2C and 2D. Tap near 30, Bury Road

(The Chemical results are stated in grams per gallon)

AMMONIA		Chlorine in Chlorides	Nitrogen as Nitrates	Nitrites	HARDNESS		BACTERIOLOGICAL RESULTS			Physical Characters
Free and Saline	Albuminoid				Total	Permanent	Colonies per ml. on Agar at 37°C.	Bac. Coliform Present in	Absent in	
trace	trace	1.7	0.62	Nil	19.0°	6.0°	2		100 ml.	BRIGHT AND CLEAR

REMARKS :

The organic quality of this water is very good and its bacteriological condition is excellent.
There is no sign of pollution, and the water is very suitable for drinking and general purposes.

LINCOLNE SUTTON AND WOOD.
(Signed) ERIC C. WOOD.

